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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000475

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DEPT FOR AF J. SWAN, AF/C M. CASEY, AF/S E. BROWN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [BY](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: MAMABOLO SAYS FNL AND GOB ON BOARD WITH PEACE PLAN

REF: A. PRETORIA 0428

[1](#)B. PRETORIA 0448

PRETORIA 00000475 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Don Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The Government of Burundi (GOB) and the Palipehutu-FNL (FNL) fully endorse the South African "Programme of Action" to conclude the FNL peace process in 2008, according to DFA Great Lakes Envoy Kingsley Mamabolo. Mamabolo, who just returned from meetings in Dar es Salaam and Bujumbura, reported that the FNL continues to make difficult demands on political and military integration, but he believes the two sides can find creative solutions to these issues, such as appointing two or three senior FNL leaders as "senior presidential advisors." Mamabolo believes the FNL is serious about the peace process, noting that the Facilitation is meeting FNL commanders from the bush for the first time. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) South African Government (SAG) Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Kingsley Mamabolo expressed his warm appreciation for the active involvement and contribution of DAS Swan at the February 22-23 "Seminar of Special Envoys Dealing with Burundi" in Cape Town (ref A). In an 06 March meeting with PolCouns and PolOff, Mamabolo stressed the importance of keeping the international partners "on the same page," noting that in the past South Africa, regional players, and Western countries sometimes took differing positions on the Burundi conflict, to the detriment to the peace process.

[1](#)3. (C) Mamabolo and the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process, SAG Minister for Safety and Security Charles Ngakula, traveled to Dar es Salaam and Bujumbura in early March following the February 22-23 Cape Town seminar to discuss the proposed "Programme of Action" with the GOB and

FNL and to formally introduce the idea of the Political Directorate. Both the FNL and GOB endorsed the Programme of Action and pledged their full cooperation. (NOTE: Per ref A, the Programme of Action proposes the creation of a Political Directorate to resolve difficult issues between the FNL and GOB, although it will not reopen existing agreements. Representatives from the FNL, GOB, Facilititation, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, AU and EU will sit on the Directorate. END NOTE.) Mamabolo will chair the Political Directorate and will spend much of his time in Bujumbura over the next six months.

14. (C) On the FNL side, Mamabolo said he was "optimistic" about the prospects for peace. For the first time, the South African Facilitation team is meeting with FNL commanders "from the bush," which Mamabolo takes as a sign of seriousness on the part of the FNL. However, the FNL continues to raise some difficult demands, including the two key issues of (1) integration of senior FNL leaders into GOB political structures, and (2) integration of FNL combatants into the Burundian military, including the military leadership. The FNL also raised with the Facilitation: Qleadership. The FNL also raised with the Facilitation:

- the creation of a new hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping force to oversee FNL integration (a "non-starter" Mamabolo acknowledged);

- the necessity of a new parliamentary act guaranteeing the FNL immunity (The Burundian Parliament says they cannot pass a law using the term "Palipehutu-FNL," since it is an ethnic name that violates the Constitution);

- increased security for the FNL leadership who will return to Bujumbura (Mamabolo left a team behind in Dar es Salaam to refine their exact demands).

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15. (C) Mamabolo noted that it would be difficult for President Nkurunziza to "give" the FNL ministries, since other parties -- who already are unhappy with the power-sharing arrangements -- would cry foul. Nkurunziza is "hiding behind the Constitution" to avoid these unsavory political choices. Mamabolo suggested to Nkurunziza that he consider making two or three FNL leaders "senior advisors" or "ministers without portfolio," perhaps even appointing FNL leader Rwasa as his advisor on integration. He noted that elections are scheduled for 2010, so this would be merely a transitional arrangement. As an aside, Mamabolo said that he believes the FNL has popular support and might do well in the 2010 elections. On military integration, Nkurunziza said that the CNDD-FDD "left room" for the FNL in the military structures, so that military integration should not be too difficult.

16. (C) COMMENT: Mamabolo seemed genuinely upbeat and optimistic about the Burundi peace process following the Cape Town seminar and consultations with the parties, although he noted that the hard part -- implementation of the plan -- is still to come. After a rocky patch in late 2007, the South African Facilitation appears to have repaired its relationship with the FNL and is committed to concluding the peace process in 2008, in part because the SAG is tired of paying for the deployment of 750 troops in Burundi. Post has found Mamabolo accessible and open, and suggests that both the Department and Embassy Bujumbura continue their close cooperation with him during the challenging months ahead. END COMMENT.
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